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ABSTRACT

Examination of state school governance structures in the late 19th century reveals three regional models, each springing from particular patterns of settlement and political administration. Historical explanations for school system origins have drawn mainly on the histories of northeastern cities and states. They have underemphasized regional divergences from the northeastern pattern. Data from the 1880 federal reports on education are used for 47 states, grouped into 5 regions, to determine whether state and local educational officials were elected or appointed. Three regional patterns of governance are identified. In the Northeast, state officials were appointed and local officials elected; in the South, state officials were elected and local officials appointed; and in the Midwest, both state and local officials were elected. Historical patterns of settlement--based on towns in the Northeast, counties in the South, and townships in the Midwest--account for much of the regional difference in political administration and school governance. Further theoretical interpretation suggests that election and appointment are based both on the level of political government just above the "unit" of social habitation and on the unit's "sociological indifference" to particular levels of government. (RW)

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Settlement Patterns and the Governing Structures of 19th Century School Systems

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Abstract

This paper examines the governing structures of state school systems as reported for 1880. Three distinctive models of governance are identified for the northeast, the south and the middle west in the appointment or election of school officers at the state and local levels. An explanation for these patterns is presented which centers on the structural relationship between local, corporate communities and the levels of general state government. The significance of the northeastern town, the southern county and the middle western township are seen as historical antecedents to the specific regional pattern of school governance.

Settlement Patterns and the Governing Structures of 19th Century School Systems

Introduction

Scholarly attention to the 19th century correlation between economic changes and educational development has generated a number of questions, not the least of which has been the origins of public school systems themselves (Craig, 1981). Consideration of the origins of school systems is a question which tends to entrap the scholar in the difficult middle ground between historically specific state histories and the broader general trends operating across states. We have, therefore, a number of substantial case studies which provide the detailed evolutionary growth of a state's public school system (Kaestle, 1973; Lazerson, 1971; Katz, 1968; Schultz, 1973). In addition, we have a number of more general models of the origins of popular education in the United States (Bowles and Gintis, 1976; Collins, 1979; Katz, 1975; Meyer, et al., 1979; Ralph and Rubinson, 1980; Richardson, 1980; Tyack, 1974). Despite differences between case studies and between theoretical perspectives, there is a consensus that a model of public school organization which was national in scope and bureaucratic in form emerged from the material and cultural changes felt between the close of the Civil War and the turn of the century. Thus, one irony of the debates over 19th century educational historiography is that less disputes have been waged over the outcome of the educational change than have been waged over the determinants which contributed to that change.

In this essay our attempt is twofold. We first critically review the bases upon which explanations for the origins of school systems have been proposed. We argue that theoretical perspectives on the development of public school systems have drawn considerably upon the historical accounts of major northeastern

cities and states and that these accounts have often been elaborated as outlining the model of national educational growth. One consequence of this has been the underemphasis upon the important lines of regional divergence in the pattern of school system development. From this review, we examine the late 19th century patterns of difference in the structure of state school system governance. Three distinct patterns in the appointment or election of state and local school officials are identified for the northeast, the south and the middle west. To account for these regional differences in school governance, the role of historic settlement patterns is proposed as a social-geographic determinant. More general propositions which are founded on the historical relationship formed between local communities and levels of political administration are advanced as theoretical interpretations.

The Paradigm of School Origins: Evolution and Differentiation

The significance of the tie between families and church within colonial communities has represented the analytical starting point in many accounts of the development of public school systems (Axtell, 1974:5-50; Kaestle, 1973:18-23; Schultz, 1973:3-21). The "evolution" of the state system of public education is conceived as a progressive detachment of the influence of religion upon the education of the young and the transfer of socialization functions onto formally recognized agents of public schooling. While there is considerable historical material which sustains this theoretical view, this outline of school development has been largely constructed from the specific historical experiences of eastern seaboard states.[1] The greater abundance and availability of historical-archival data on these school systems accounts, in part, for their use as prototypes of schooling in America. Yet, when one reviews the major historical and sociological works which have shared in some ways in the resurgence of American educational historiography, one is struck by the degree to which this research

literature is confined to this northeastern region. The Boston public schools and/or the influential educational tradition of Massachusetts have often served as case studies (Katz, 1968; Schultz, 1973; Kaestle, 1973) or have implicitly been projected as models of educational change generally (Kaestle and Vinovskis, 1978; Katz, 1975; Tyack, 1974).

This "easternization" of educational historiography initially makes some very good sense, for these cities led most others in the establishment of publicly supported schooling and in the enactment of compulsory school attendance legislation (Richardson, 1980). Yet, arguing that their leadership in these matters "diffused" into a developing national system of public schooling can be a dangerous thesis, as has been duly noted (Meyer, et al., 1979:595). One such danger is the extrapolation of the social-economic and political experiences of northeastern states as generative of educational structures elsewhere. The empirical features of these experiences have largely been ones of group conflict and political resolution.

The history of the religious-based struggles over the control of common schooling is vividly portrayed in the celebrated Protestant-Catholic debates of 1841 in New York (Bidwell, 1966; Ravitch, 1974). The traditional dominance of the New York School Society and its representation of Protestant denominations was forced to recognize the numerical strength of Catholics in New York City and to consequently relinquish its hold over the system of common schools to the state legislature. Similarly, the effect in Massachusetts of prolonged sectarian conflict over school content led to the formalization of state-committed support for public schooling. Significantly, this transfer from religious-based to state-based support was one which "stressed the political rather than the religious benefits of an educated public" (Kaestle and Vinovskis, 1978:47).

The significance of the historical examples of New York and Boston lies in how religious and class divisions represented both the bases and rationale for the political resolution of a state-supported and administered public educational system. The examples of New York and Boston have been elaborated as prototypical models of schooling precisely because their development sharply illustrates the dominant trend of the late 19th century, namely, the rise of "juristic persons" legally empowered as corporate entities and the corresponding subordination of "natural persons" and particularistic groups (Coleman, 1974). The formal origin of the Massachusetts and New York school systems occurred when the governance of schooling ceased to be confined within autonomous social groups. The "loss of power" by any one group over schooling was balanced only to the degree that contending groups stood to gain from the transfer of some measure of school control onto a centralized agency. The bureaucratization of the state school system functioned, in part, to elevate the administration of public education above intrusive and costly sectarian conflicts. The outcome of this political resolution was a particular organizational form of school governance: local, community control was juxtaposed to centralized administration. Specifically, at the state level a hierarchy of positions filled through political appointment was superimposed on communities which retained democratic control through popular election of school officials (Katz, 1975:49; see also Kaestle and Vinovskis, 1980:6). It is the contrast between local election and state appointment which represents one of the salient features of the northeastern bureaucratic model.

It is the latter feature of northeastern school systems which has been implied as the evolutionary course taken in the late 19th century by public education generally. Katz' description (1975:72) of the bureaucratization of the Massachusetts school system as "the rationalization of increasingly complex administrative problems, reinforced by the nepotism and politics that afflicted school practice" is a succinct description fitting other northeastern states as

well, yet it is not an historically accurate one for most states outside of this region. Differences in the political organization of state school systems present heuristic examples of divergent lines of development. Moreover, it is here that explanations other than those typically taken from the historically specific experiences of dominant northeastern states must be sought.

Patterns of Difference in School Governance: 1880

The Structure of School Governance

The shape of school governance is historically rooted in two influences, which though consistently noted in literature, are rarely attributed causal significance. The first is ecological. It denotes the patterns of population settlement, the shape of ecological units wherein the predominant social functions of community living are enclosed (Warren, 1963:167). The different regional patterns of original settlement, involving the circumstances of migration and the receiving geographic landscape, all contributed to the alternative forms of social habitation. Such conditions imposed different constraints on the formation of communities and, in turn, on what units would achieve or be granted "corporate status."

The second is governmental. It denotes the hierarchical levels of general state government. Below the state level, the county and township levels have been the most recognized divisions of state government (Fairlie, 1906; Howard, 1889). The relative importance of substate levels and the character of the community units subordinate to them, form the historical backdrop to the forms of 19th century school governance.

The relationship between community units and political levels constitutes, one may say, the infrastructure of school governance. To the extent school governance reflects the capacity to exert social control, relationships between communities and political levels will have historical roots in original settlement patterns and their spatial imprints. As we learn from spatial geometry

(Boulding, 1953), expansion of the territory of a population will mean that the distance from the center of control to the periphery becomes a declining proportion of the total area to be controlled. The governance by a political level of local school affairs will be affected by the ecological relations which interconnect communities.

While the spatial metaphor may inform us of the internal structure of school governance, it helps also to clarify the contrast between election and appointment as the twin processes whereby school positions were established. The bureaucratic model delineated for northeastern states stresses the self-perpetuation of authority positions at the state level through appointment. Their removal from popular election ensured their insulation from subordinate community units. Where appointment signified governance through delegated authority, election underscored popular access to school positions. The appointment or election of school positions at the state and at the local levels represents the measurable expression of the relationship between community units and political levels. It is here that we may best discern the different historical courses taken in the development of state school systems.

Evidence of Regional Divergence in School Governance

Historical data on school governing structures for the late 19th century are somewhat restricted, yet reports by states provide sufficient outline of school political organization. The information reported on school administration, and on school officers, given in the Reports of the Commission of Education for 1880 (Report, 1882), is examined here. The individual reports on the administrative structure of state school systems specify both the structure of positions and the manner of their formation. Specifically, the school officers of the state and of the local levels are identified whether they are appointed or elected. The reports on school superintendents and on school boards and

their election or appointment, are given for the states. The administration of local school affairs corresponds primarily to the county or township political level. While reports on the operation of elementary school districts are often given, the essential element of school administration was the delineation of state or county or township jurisdiction.

Each state report was coded as to the elective or appointive status of state-level and local-level school officers. The coding involved the determination of the dominant procedure of each level. For nearly all states, determination of elective or appointive status was unambiguous. Where the state superintendent was reported as "elected by the people," yet the state board was reported as consisting of the governor and secretary of state, the state-level was coded as elective. Thus, two criteria guided the coding of school governance. The first was the identification of specific school officers, independent of general state officials. The second was the source of election or appointment. If school officers were elected by the general state legislature, this was coded as appointive. Elective status was determined by clear indication of direct popular access to or control over the selection of school officers. If a school officer was chosen from among a limited number of educational figures, themselves popularly elected by communities, the level was also coded as elective.

The pattern of elective/appointive status by political level is given in Table 1. The states are organized by five geographic regions. The five regions indicated are taken from the literature which drew these boundaries as recognized units sharing common social and economic patterns of settlement and of growth (Odum and Moore, 1938). The organization of the states by region demonstrates the very strong association between school governing structure and common geographic area. These patterns reveal evidence that the structure of school governance formed in states by the latter part of the 19th century did not

diffuse from a northeastern center.

Insert Table 1 here

The distribution of states by geographic region reveals three distinct models of school governance. The first, predominating in states of the northeast, is one where the state level is appointive and the local level is elective. Departures from this are evident in only three of eleven states: both levels are appointive in two and both are elective in one. The second model, found in the southern states, is the reverse of that for the northeast: the state level is elective and the local level is appointive. Four of these eleven states deviate from this pattern, with Georgia and Virginia having both levels appointive and Tennessee and North Carolina appointive at the state level and elective at the local level. The third model characterizes the middle western states and is one where both state and local levels are elective. Only one state deviates from this predominant pattern, with Minnesota following the "eastern" model. The model of school governance for the remaining states of the far western and southwestern regions is evenly split between the eastern model of appointive/elective, and the middle western model where both levels are elective. Only Texas conforms to the southern pattern. Additional reviews of school reports for 1875, 1890 and 1905 underscore the reliability of the patterns indicated for 1880. Three southern states altered their governing structures in 1890, with North Carolina and Virginia conforming to the predominant pattern of state-level election and local-level appointment, and Kentucky changing to both levels elective. Two western states changed in 1890, with Washington and Wyoming adopting both levels elective.

This strong association between governing structure and geographic region suggests that elements shaping the political systems of public education operated at the level of geographic region and may have been selectively modified through

historical experiences specific to individual states. The explanatory problem is to identify the preconditions for the historical emergence of a type of school governing structure. The methodological task necessarily enjoins two objectives: to identify the preconditions for a given school governing structure within states, and yet formulate more general statements which interpret the relationship between preconditions and school governance. A note on the appropriate strategy is thus important.

Comparative Analysis and Genetic Explanation

Appointive or elective processes are conceptualized as the means through which relationships between jurisdictional levels are formed. Each process presumes differences in the organizational relationship between political levels and presumes differences in the historic role of social units comprising political levels. Similar to ideal types, modes of school governance are simultaneously historical outcomes which require explanation and the means whereby explanation is reached. They are, in a root sense, generic concepts, constructed "by abstracting and accentuating certain conceptually essential elements" (Weber, 1949: 100). As units of historical analysis, they facilitate the identification of conditions that are causally associated with a given historical outcome. The analytical strategy is necessarily implicated in "genetic" explanation, which attempts to explain "why it is that a given subject has evolved out of some earlier one" (Nagel, 1961:25). The preliminary task is to delimit the number of factors which are logically determined to be plausible preconditions of an historical outcome.

The method of genetic explanation is particularly suited to research conditions that are constrained by a limited number of cases. Such conditions do not render usual statistical analyses possible. Rather, as alternative to variable-based statistical analyses, a case-based, comparative historical analysis is appropriate (Ragin and Zaret, 1981). Comparative analysis is guided

by a criterion of "logical consistency" which assists both the selection and validation of relevant preconditions. Thus, if an outcome A is found to be associated with preconditions b and c, instances of outcome B should not be observed where b and c are found. To the extent that this consistency holds for a number of cases, the validity of their causal association is strengthened (Sewell, 1967; Skocpol, 1980:35-40).

The successful demonstration of causal associations is balanced only through the assertion of more general interpretive statements (Zaret, 1980:1187). Interpretive propositions attempt to predict historical combinations given adequate knowledge of specific antecedent conditions. The methodology of genetic explanation contains, in sum, two interrelated segments: demonstration of specific causal relations, and their interpretation through more general concepts arranged in propositional form.

The next section investigates specific patterns of settlement as the significant historical antecedents to school governing structures. The pattern of settlement which shaped the formation of corporate community units and their relation to political levels is examined for the northeastern, southern and middle western regions. The far western and southwestern regions are not discussed for two reasons. First, their settlement was later than any of the previous three, commencing largely with the termination of the Civil War. Secondly, it is clear that the far west does not exhibit a distinctive model of school governance but is a mixture of the northeastern or middle western forms. The focus of the analysis here is on the antecedents to modal types of school governance, and is not directed to the explanation of particular states. For these reasons, we limit the analysis to the northeast, the south and the middle west.

Patterns of Settlement and the Organization of Common Schooling

Northeastern Settlement

The states which comprise the northeastern region are the oldest areas of settlement in the United States. The settlement of the eastern seaboard is inseparable from the history of the original colonies. The colonial social structure was shaped by both the transplantation of English traditions of local governance and by the distinct geographic influences which faced the original settlers.

The most evident English influence is the importance of the New England "town."[2] The town is most directly traceable to the elementary social areas of English habitation. Anglo-Saxon kingdoms were divided into shires, which were further divided into districts known as hundreds, and these were in turn divided into townships (Fairlie, 1906:4). The township was fundamentally a social area of habitation, while the shire was the level through which the political integration of townships was achieved. The towns were autocthynous inasmuch as their organization, and powers were originally owed to the political decisions of the Massachusetts Colony. The original division of land in New England was a form of county division, equivalent to the English shire. The towns of New England underwent an organic growth after their genesis as "cells" of the colony (Adams, et al., 1892).

The management of the affairs of individual townships was conducted by "selectmen," individuals of important social standing to whom critical functions were entrusted. The early colonial settlements, primarily ones established prior to 1647, carried over this English tradition of local governance, notably the "principle of obligation" whereby the body of selectmen was recruited through appointment or "co-optation" (Webb and Webb, 1963:32). In place of community election, selectmen assumed political duties in accordance with their chosen vocations. This tradition of town governance is significant as an historical

legacy of limited popular participation and as a precedent of appointment over election. The reliance upon "co-optation" as a means to determine the governing body of early colonies was progressively made more democratic, yet tended to alternate between governance by selectmen and the more popular governance through the town meeting.

Both the original governance through selectmen and its gradual replacement with the town meeting can be directly tied to the conditions of settlement which shaped the colonial social structure. The early colonies were compact settlements, characterized by a proprietorship of land which was held in common or divided according to the will of the majority. Farmlands were separated from the central core of houses and thereby reinforced the compactness of habitation. This pattern of settlement was necessitated, at least initially, by the constant fear of native populations and by the difficulty of securing an adequate supply of food. Moreover, as land was the most valuable of items, the amount granted to each small settlement tended to be large. Consequently, settlements were separated by considerable spatial distances, which made their interconnection altogether weak.

Such conditions gave much importance to the role of religious conformity. The affinity between the sectarian proscriptions of Puritanism and the isolated conditions of settlement contributed to the original communal integration of the colonies. In addition to the ideological function of Puritanism, the church assumed an ecological significance. As a means to sustain colonial unity, the church was strategically located within the core of houses and laws stipulated that no home be built at a distance greater than one-half mile from the meeting house or church. The centrality of religion in school struggles of the late 19th century was foreshadowed by the ecological and ideological importance of the church in colonial settlements. Thus, "it was in this compact form of settlement that the church-town school spent its entire existence, and in which the

civil school had its birth as well" (Updegraff, 1908:95).

The relation of the settlers to the land and the importance of religion as the means which secured this relation is the historical backdrop to the development of inequalities in schooling. The compactness of early settlements, necessitated by external conditions and sustained through internal religious ties, defined inhabitants of the core houses as the "unchanging body of the people" (Channing, 1886:30). The traditional repulsion exercised toward outsiders made admission to a settlement conditional upon religious conformity and/or inclusion into the structure of land ownership (Adams, et al., 1892:202). With the increase and dispersion of population, persons began to be received as townsmen who did not own land. The line of distinction between owners and non-owners of land established a very marked and noticeable division. While these internal economic distinctions weakened the hold of the town church upon the settlement, they exerted a pressure toward a division of the land into the smallest social units capable of community habitation.

In addition to the effects of population increase on territorial subdivision, family inheritance practices contributed to the early decline of the homogeneous colonial settlement. Through the partitioning of family land holdings, reinforced by the unequal allotments of farm acreage by town managers, considerable economic disparities became evident by the second generation of settlers (Bumsted and Lemon, 1968; Greven, 1970; Powell, 1963). While the nucleated form of settlement weakened, it did not disintegrate. Rather, the inability of subsequent generations to secure parcels of land became the very forces behind the generation of new towns (Greven, 1965; Trewartha, 1946). In response to both population increases and economic inequalities, the discrepancy between allotment of town funds and the benefits derived from common institutions became publicly evident. The school most sharply sumbolized this discrepancy. As a consequence, the

schoolhouse of the center "moved" (Updegraff, 1908) to the parishes on the periphery, recreated, as it were, "around a new church and school nucleus" (Trewartha, 1964:575). The alternating historical process of town growth and subsequent subdivision into smaller, parish units, is the predecessor to the formation of the school district, the unit common through the northeastern states by the 18th century.

The significance of northeastern settlement patterns to school governance lies in the manner in which school units became embedded in compact communities. The overlap between school district and elementary social areas reinforced the connection between ascriptive or socioeconomic groups and the control of schooling. The struggles over unequal access to and control over schooling which were to dominate the latter half of the 19th century have their historical roots in early settlement patterns. The educational historiography which has been based on northeastern states correctly describes the "evolution" of the civil school out of the church-controlled and town-centered school. The retention of elective status at the political level uniting small, local areas, attests to the survival of the strong historical relation between community area and school unit. The tendency to appoint at the state level may indicate that popular participation in the formation of levels beyond that which integrates towns and districts, is less consequential.

Southern States

During the 19th century it was commonplace to cite the educational backwardness of public education in the South. Explanations for the slowness of development tended to place major responsibility on cultural resistance stemming from the Civil War and Reconstruction (Rose, 1905:362). To be sure, these events were instrumental in retarding the growth of schooling (Knight, 1969). Nonetheless, more detailed historical treatments of schooling in the South, while recognizing points of difference with other regions, underscore its basic

similarity to educational objectives elsewhere (Knight, 1915; 1922). In so doing, attention is directed to factors which specify measurable influences on the development of schooling.

One such influence was the impact of population dispersion. The predominant feature of early settlement in southern states was plantation agriculture based in a slave economy and the paucity of compact settlements in the form of towns or cities. While the myth of the Old South as "nonurban" has been put to rest (see Curry, 1974:46-49; Ernst and Merrens, 1973), the impact of early population settlement on the growth of autonomous, commercial towns is the relevant point here. Southern settlement was dominated by ownership of tracts of land by a plantation-based elite (Eaton, 1949:56; Moore, 1966:117) juxtaposed to a large number of small farm owners situated in isolated farmsteads. In contrast to the northeastern states where open field, nucleated settlement contributed to the emergence of towns as the corporate unit of habitation, the county was the primary unit in the South. Concerted social interaction was infrequent below the county level, for in southern states "the county was perhaps the smallest district where there was a sufficient number of persons with political power to make possible any collective public activity" (Fairlie, 1906:192).

The conditions of population dispersion did not permit, as in New England, a process of territorial subdivision (Weeks, 1898:1407). The counties in southern states were, however, divided into districts, for purposes of local government. Such districts, for magisterial, electoral or educational functions, differed from the towns of New England in two important ways. First, these districts were designated as the arena within which any one specific social or political function was conducted. As a consequence, the districts "were neither coterminous nor inclusive in area, but may overlap each other" (Fairlie and Kneier, 1930:469). To the extent that districts rarely performed more than one function, and often mixed populations, they were prohibited from developing an internal cohesiveness

as did the smaller parishes within New England towns. Secondly, these county districts did not constitute corporate entities. They did not possess powers defining them as autonomous units relative to the county or to the state (Van Wyck, 1882:210). The county court or board of commissioners was the dominant body which held the authority to influence the essential social activities of smaller settlements. Thus, the county was that unit which enclosed the primary social activities of habitation. Its territorial size necessitated politically subordinate yet arbitrary subdivisions. These subdivisions, however, could attain social or political autonomy only under favorable population or economic circumstances.

A dispersed pattern of settlement directly affected the genesis of transportation patterns within and across counties. Key to these patterns was the structure of social relations within counties. As the smallest unit of organized and enduring social habitation, the county was the only culturally meaningful unit which was capable of uniting the plantation owning elite and the large number of small peasant farmers. The economic gap between these two strata did not predispose them toward community interaction (Bemis, 1893:13). Moreover, the absence of a commercial middle class inhibited the growth of independent towns or cities which might challenge the dominance of the plantation elite. While divergent economic and cultural interests divided the two, they were nonetheless united through the strategic ecological location of the county courthouse. A courthouse-centered system served the political interests of the elite for it connected the dispersed farm population to the courthouse by a number of roads which radiated outward in a centrifugal pattern (Newton, 1974:343). The denials of corporate standing to any settlement lower than that of the county, even where original settlers brought the heritage of the New England town (Bemis, 1893), is a feature of local governance adaptive to the geographic and population constraints of southern states.

The road and highway system internal to counties often articulated with a broader transportation system designed to interconnect counties to the state capital. Roads traversing counties would knit the various counties into the state level. Roads which cut across county boundaries were often the results of neighboring counties which joined their populations for purposes of sub-county district formation. School districts were often not confined within a single county, but were formed through the association of two counties where each lacked the sufficient population base to form its own district. The overlapping of counties represented a force which both minimized tendencies toward territorial subdivision characteristic of northeastern states, and increased the attraction of counties toward a more integrated state political level. The historical design of roads and highways is rooted in the early conditions of population settlement across expansive territories. The isolation of small communities and their weak means of communication were conditions which fostered political centralization but which gave importance to the democratic participation of counties in the formation of state government.

The pattern of dispersed settlement, the prevalence of isolated farmsteads and the paucity of commercial towns were features which left their marks on public schooling and its governance well to the end of the 19th century. Given the absence of corporate communities below the level of the county, there was little autonomous schooling to be governed below this political level. The crucial nexus was the relationship between counties and the state; the system of common schooling emanated from the state level. The appointment of curcuit superintendents, often to counties with which they had little or no personal ties, ensured a neutrality of governance over the only essential corporate units in the state. School governance in southern states was not unlike the structure of governance in ancient China (Weber, 1951:47-50). There, as in most southern states, the task of governance was necessarily directed to two persistent

concerns: the political implications of deep social divisions, and the need to create territorial cohesion. The appointment of county school officers in southern states, like the appointment of district magistrates in China (see Watt, 1972), was an attempt to create territorial integration.

Middle-Western States

The history of settlement in the "Northwest Territory" most certainly involves the migration of groups from northeastern and southern states. The migration to western lands tended to follow lines parallel to points of origination. Yet, the formation of a relatively distinct "middle western" pattern of settlement can not be sufficiently explained by migration flows alone. As a comparative latecomer to statehood, this large central territory was settled under conditions not to be found in either New England or the South. Differences in the timing and in the process of settlement contributed to a unique pattern of local government. The mode of school governance is the direct outcome of the midwestern model of local government.

The outstanding fact of the regional development of the middle western states is that settlement was conducted in a relatively planned, rather than an "organic" fashion. That is, settlement was shaped in advance of migration by congressional legislation. The Ordinance of 1785 gave to the emerging states an enormous educational fund through the legislative designation of a portion of land for school purposes only, to be secured as an inalienable fund. The settlement of the middle west, proceeding from 1800 to about 1860 through the steady in-migration of people from New England and southern states, was conducted through the division of territory into plats of townships 6 miles square, which were further divided into lots of 1 mile square or 640 acres and numbered 1 through 36 (Pattison, 1964). The 16th lot or "section" was specifically reserved for schools and an adjoining section, number 22, was to be reserved for the church. The final Ordinance of 1787 amended the legislation of 1785

to abolish the section for religion, thereby mandating one portion of land for educational purposes only.

This method of congressional division of the public domain gave to these bodies of 6 mile square the New England name of "townships." The units were corporate entities and became the primary units of local government. Thus, this pattern of settlement reversed that for the northeast: "As New England township life grew up around the church, so western localism finds its nucleus in the school system" (Shaw, 1883:10). Where religion was the crucial organizing force in eastern colonial settlement, the schoolhouse was the agent through which collective public life was formed in the middle western states. This difference in original settlement patterns offers a partial explanation for why a theoretical framework which emphasizes the struggle to remove schooling from the hold of religious sectarianism would not fit the historical experiences of most middle western states.

The adoption of the township system was in most cases the consensus of all counties comprising a middle western state. In some states the paths of northern and southern migration produced an opposition between the New England "village" model and the southern "county" model. Although this opposition attests to the importance of cultural diffusion, nearly all middle western states elected to adopt the township system (Bemis, 1883). Adoption of the township system benefited, in part, from the migrants' familiarity with the school district of the New England states. Indeed, the township system "was a western protest against the wasteful district system of the east" (Boone, 1906:147). The inequalities engendered by the eastern district model, reinforced by the control by socially independent areas over schooling, were minimized by the artificial nature of school location. The potential for particular group dominance of schooling was cut off in advance by the geographic balance between school "section" and civil township. The fact that the common school system was

embedded in each township in an orderly and common fashion, produced a system described as "theoretically symmetrical," and "contributed to the theory that the system is the common school system of the state and not of localities" (Bowman, 1903:89; see also Kiehle, 1903:18-21). The eventual accommodation of both eastern and southern migrants to the pattern of governance by townships was an outcome of congressional territorial division and of economic conditions specific to the region. The former may have designated the school house as the "nucleus" of the settlement, but the latter reinforced the conception of schooling as the source of collective identity.

In addition to the educational provisions set out in the Ordinance of 1787, the economic conditions of the region were favorable to a democratic cooperation not observed in the east or the south. The economic circumstances of settlement consisted of an internal orientation of pure capitalism and an external dependency upon export to distant markets. Settlement in these central states was not simply to reproduce homesteads and a traditional agrarian society. Unlike the New England pattern, settlement was not in compact towns but "in isolated farmstead, set in the middle of a large, consolidated holding, with no common lands and very little fragmentation" (Parker, 1975:9). The absence of open field agriculture, a basis for inherited inequality, was never begun in these states but was supplanted by a pattern of free farms rooted in a family organization. The pattern of family farms, situated on parcels of land ranging between 80 and 160 acres, was not a condition of direct competition among families but of cooperative competition for the generation of economic surplus destined for eastern and southern markets. Eastern seaboard penetration of the region was considerable, yet the ties to distant markets released settlers from internal economic conflicts. The link to external markets sustained the commitment to maximizing the potential yield of the land. The peculiar association between an orderly pattern of land settlement and of economic ties to outside markets enlarged

the occupational diversity beyond direct agricultural labor. This did not immediately give way to eastern patterns of ethnic and class divisions, or to the southern pattern of caste relations. Rather, such economic opportunities symbolized possible achievements for the labor of new migrants. Although individualistic in private economic pursuits of their families, there was from very early on a public and associational commitment to the political affairs and social functions of township life, and thus to a common schooling.

Where we encounter a history of group conflict over schooling for northeastern states, schooling in middle western states was attributed a collective respect. The structure of townships and their spatial interconnection lay at the root of this respect and reinforced popular control over school governance. A township which did not set up a school, employ a teacher and ensure some minimal level of attendance, would relinquish its share of revenue to other townships (Burns, 1905:55-6). This "involuntary contribution" elevated township benefits over the gains of particular groups. The elective pattern of school governance found in middle western states expresses the historical intersection between corporate communities and level of political organization.

Summary

Let us summarize the evidence on regional settlement patterns and their corresponding social and political formations. For the northeast, the conditions of original open-field, nucleated settlement, together with unigeniture patterns of inheritance, were sufficient antecedents to the rise of towns. These towns were politically autonomous and characterized by marked internal inequalities. For the south, the condition of early settlement in isolated farmsteads dispersed across large territorial areas, was associated with sharp divisions of race and inherited privilege. Such conditions were favorable neither to the spread of autonomous towns, nor to a commercial class capable of challenging the political dominance of a land-based elite. For the middle west, individual farmsteads,

situated in an orderly manner within townships, were nonetheless interconnected through common social and political activities. While the ties of economic dependence to northeastern markets promoted the diversity of economic development, settlement in regular townships militated against economic inequalities assuming major political divisions. We may concur with Moore (1966:115) "that by 1860, the United States had developed three quite different forms of society in different parts of the country: the cotton-growing South; the West, a land of free farmers; and the rapidly industrializing Northeast."[3]

While indeed different regional societies, a theoretical interpretation of their alternative forms of school governance requires that we move above the Charybdis of individual experiences. For this, we return to the distinction made at the outset between ecological units and political levels.

A Theoretical Interpretation: Education and the Integration of Communities

The impact of settlement patterns on school governing structures centers on two variables: the unit of social habitation and the level of state political government. The unit of habitation describes the territorial area which encompasses the basic economic and social activities of community living. The regional areas identify three relatively distinct units: the northeastern town, the southern county and the middle-western township. These units differed in the scope of their territorial boundary, with the town the most compact, the southern county the most expansive and the middle western township exactly specified. Despite this difference in territorial size, each unit represented the "community" as defined in classical human ecology. Each unit held the status of a corporate entity which meant, in part, that such vital community responsibilities as the maintenance of roads, fences and boundaries, the supervision of the poor and local taxation were enclosed within their jurisdictions (Howard, 1889). To these community functions was added the education of the young, thereby establishing a set of community duties which exerted an

independent pressure toward a "common" schooling.

While the conduct of school affairs would be enclosed within corporate units, the governance of common schooling was shaped by the structural relationship between such units and political levels. In this respect, the three regional areas differed significantly. In the northeast, the corporate units were subordinate to the county political level. While the New England towns enjoyed considerable autonomy, they were nonetheless subject to the supervisory authority of the county court (Howard, 1889:333). The autocthynous pattern of settlement was the historical antecedent to this interconnection between towns and the county court. While the former were invested with corporate powers, the latter remained critical to the collective integration of the towns. In the middle west, the township was simultaneously corporate unit and political level. The two intersected through the historical experience of planned settlement. The intersection of corporate unit and political level maintained the unique condition of structural balance between area of habitation and political governance. The affairs of schooling were neither controlled by particular groups nor subject to conflicting subcounty authority. In the south, the county was the essential corporate unit as well as the political level. Yet, in contrast to the middle west, this relationship was formed through natural settlement and reinforced by specific geographical conditions of a dispersed population over an expansive territory.

Thus, the precise relationship between corporate unit and political level differed for the three regional areas and their differences are rooted in historical patterns of settlement. Despite these specific historical experiences, a theoretical interpretation may be proposed which generalizes from their individual experiences.

Theoretical interpretation may be grounded in a succinct hypothesis: <u>educational election will tend to be exercised at the political level immediately</u>

above corporate units. While electoral participation in the selection of school transfers school governance to a level outside of communities, it simultaneously binds them to a broader network. School governance at the level immediately superior to corporate units establishes a broader constitutency than that given by the local community.[4] In the absence of this constituency, the various communities remain in geographic isolation. This exercise of educational election has effects similar to rules of reciprocity in kinship structures which, as Levi-Strauss noted (1969:69), "substitute a social relationship for spatial juxtaposition." Thus the county or township was the level immediately superior to the northeastern towns. It was through this level that their spatial juxtaposition was overcome. For southern states, the various counties as corporate units could achieve a social integration only at the state level. Educational election for both regions functioned to integrate otherwise independent corporate communities. For the middle western states, corporate communities and political level were not only coterminous, but were equal in scale. The combination of planned settlement and the equality of territorial units reduced points of conflict and contributed to the overall integration of townships. Educational election at both the county and state level would be essentially equivalent.

By extention of the hypothesis, we may propose that appointment will tend to be exercised at political levels toward which corporate communities are sociologically indifferent. For northeastern towns, electoral participation in the state level was not as critical to their integration as was participation in the county level. In this light, we may more clearly understand the emphasis given to the "bureaucratic" features of educational development in northeastern states. The bureaucratization of educational systems at the state level, of which the appointive status of school officers was one aspect, could be effectively ignored by towns for such indifference did not essentially alter their hold over the school district. For southern states, political appointment of county school officers was

legitimated by the prior popular election of the State Superintendent. The absence of viable corporate units below the county level minimized the chances of a popular disaffection as well as removed the need for a "political resolution" of conflicts among independent communities over schooling.

We may go further. In the northeast, the benefits from the locus of state appointment over local election were not only to the state. The appointment of state level school officers, and the codification of educational policy, contributed to the "predictability" of governance over local school affairs. The local communities were, in effect, protected from arbitrary actions based in political interests. The appointment of school officers signified a distancing of governance from the communities where administrative decisions would be felt. Crozier (1964:189) captured this tendency toward bureaucratic centralization: "Therefore, the power to make decisions and to interpret and complete the rules, as well as the power to change the rules or to institute new ones, will tend to grow farther and farther away from the field where those rules will be carried out." The rationalization of school governance may have supplanted voluntarism with impersonal rules, yet it also resolved the political integration of corporate communities and the state level.

Conclusions

The analysis here critiques the generalization of a northeastern bureaucratic model of school governance. Yet, it also provides support, in the main, for the interpretation of it as the outcome of a political resolution. Nonetheless, the evidence of distinct regional differences requires that the ecological factor accompany the political as a contributor to the specific form of school governance. The merit of the ecological factor is its capacity to focus inquiry. Ecological influences are discernible as measurable constraints setting the bounds within which social activities can be conducted. The inclusion of the ecological variable is particularly well suited to the analysis of schooling.

The enduring requirement for a common schooling is the spatial concentration of school-age children. Lacking this, there is little that cultural or educational ideas alone can do to promote schooling. This, in turn, affects what schooling is to be governed.

The influence of settlement patterns on school governance becomes evident when the precise relationship between units of habitation and levels of state government is understood. The analysis has identified three distinct units of habitation as the historical products of regional settlement. The northeastern town, the southern county and the middle western township are seen as causally associated to the specific form of school governance taken in each region. The relationship forged between these elementary corporate units and the levels of state government emerges as the necessary precondition to elective or appointive status of school officers. It is hypothesized that elective processes will be evident at the political level immediately above corporate units, while appointive processes will be evident at levels toward which corporate units are sociologically indifferent.

The state-level patterns of school governance have certainly changed since the late 19th century. Nonetheless, this analysis suggests that such changes may follow specific developmental paths. As the character of corporate units changes, and as the relationship between these units and political levels changes, the form of school governance may be anticipated as the organizational outcome.

Finally, the analysis of school governance suggests that the historical relation between community units and levels of state government may structure the organizational context within which educational issues are formed and contested. Where the density of local communities may enable them to exercise democratic controls over schooling, the interconnections of communities would enable the state level to penetrate deeper into local school affairs. The span of state administrative control would rest precisely on the density and

interconnections of local communities (see Blau, 1977:49; Stinchcombe, 1965). For the northeast, the historical significance of the town set early preconditions for the continued influence of ethnic and socioeconomic groups over public schooling. Nonetheless, the greater interdependence of towns facilitates the access of the state administrative level to local school affairs. For the south, the historical lack of density at the community level has coexisted with state centralization. Yet, the weakness of community interconnections means, in part, that local patterns, school segregation particularly, may go unaffected by state level initiatives. For the middle west, the historical significance of the township may serve to lessen the influence of ethnic and socioeconomic groups due precisely to the more balanced division of powers in state school systems.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Kaestle (1978), in a critique of the "functionalist" model of educational change, noted that its use was pervasive among social historians, "whether they like it or not." Kaestle quite justifiably turns to the resistance of families and parents to the common school as evidence of the over-generalization of the functionalist model. Nonetheless, it is pertinent to this discussion that, while his title speaks to 19th century America, his examples are drawn from Massachusetts.

[2]The debate over the actual origins of the New England town was a lively one (Adams, 1882; see also Eisenstadt, 1956:14-20). Despite this controversy, it is clear that the New England town can be traced to Anglo-Saxon terminology, although it is not to be argued that it is a direct replica of English towns. The reproduction of the English terms of shire, hundreds and township is evidence of this heritage.

[3]The different regional patterns of settlement and their social and political imprints characterizing the U.S. bear a striking similarity to the three regional modes of production identified as antecedents to the patterns of state formation in Western Europe (Hechter and Brustein, 1980). The feudal, sedentary and petty commodity systems present features similar to those outlined for the northeast, the south and the middle west, respectively. The feudal system, most conducive to state formation, was characterized by open-field, nucleated settlement, nonallodial property rights, the presence of towns and the influence of significant political divisions. The sedentary pastoral system, most resistant to state formation, was characterized by isolated and sparce settlement in hamlets, the scarcity of towns, and the predominance of kinship-based political

organization. The petty commodity form, intermediate to the feudal and sedentary pastoral, was characterized by settlement in fields which were square in size, a greater diversity of crops and the dependence of agricultural yields on more distant markets. For the latter, the individual peasant allods, freely bought and sold, contributed to inequalities of wealth, yet the "domination of the countryside by the towns" blurred class distinctions and weakened them as potential political divisions. The strong similarities between the two examples lends some additional support to the link proposed here between regional settlement patterns and the political organization of schooling.

[4]. This parallels, in conceptual terms, what Durkheim (1956) elaborated as the function of education. In a discussion of the many "special educations" resulting from the diversity of occupations, castes or localities, Durkheim noted (1956:69) "that they are not sufficient unto themselves; everywhere that one observes them, they vary from one another only beyond a certain point, up to which they are not differentiated. They all rest on a common base." This common base derives from the requirement that private and local affairs be subordinated to a broader collective integration. Just as the State cannot remian indifferent to either the process of education nor to its consequences, the organization of school governance cannot be sustained if the mere spatial juxtaposition of local communities is permitted to exist.

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Table 1

Governing Structures of State School Systems: 1880

Northeast		South	
Connecticut	AE	Alabama	EA
Delaware	AE	Arkansas	EA
Maine	AE	Florida	EA
Maryland	AA	Georgia	AA
Massachusetts	AE	Kentucky	EA
New Hampshire	AE	Louisiana	EA
New Jersey	AA	Mississippi	EA
New York	AE	North Carolina	AE
Pennsylvania	AE	South Carolina	EA
Rhode Island	AE	Tennessee	AE
Vermont	AE	Virginia	AA
West Virginia	EE		
Mountain/West		**Middle West**	
California	EE	Illinois	EE
Colorado	EE	Indiana	EE
Dakotas	AE	Iowa	EE
Idaho	EE	Kansas	EE
Montana	AE	Michigan	EE
Nevada	EE	Minnesota	AE
Oregon	EE	Missouri	EE
Utah	EE	Nebraska	EE
Washington	AE	Ohio	EE
Wyoming	AE	Wisconsin	EE
Southwest			
Arizona	AE		
New Mexico	AE		
Oklahoma	*		
Texas	EA		

AA: Both state and local levels appointed
EE: Both state and local levels elected
AE: State level appointed/local elected
EA: State level elected/local appointed
* No reports on state officers